

MIDDLETOWN TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Parents and Sophomores Students, Class of 2019:

We are pleased to continue with the district summer reading expectations for students entering grades nine through twelve which was introduced two years ago. This year, the list of recommended reading selections was greatly expanded to account for a broader range of student choices that are representative of multiple genres and cover topics of current interest to high school students. Additionally, the related summer reading assignments were restructured. Students will be expected to present a “book talk” to a group of their peers some time during the first several weeks of the school year. Upon their return, all students will complete an in-class timed writing assignment based on the book that they did not select for their book talk. While all students must read at least two books, we are hopeful that the expanded lists will encourage students to read more and look forward to the *luxury of time* that summer will provide and allow them to experience the joy of reading books they will love.

Current research on summer reading largely exposes the extent to which a several month gap in literacy activities can hinder reading growth. Our efforts in this revision process were focused upon seeking out titles and activities that are motivating to current high school students and offer them a greater incentive to pick up a few good books to help pass the summer months. The intention of the summer reading expectation is to foster continued application of the valuable reading strategies and skills that students have learned during the school year. We invite students to fall in love with marvelous characters, open the door to new worlds, and embark on wild adventures.

We encourage parents and guardians of students entering 10<sup>th</sup> grade to be actively involved in the book selection process to approve the genre, topic and age-level appropriateness of selected books. Please take some time to review the grade level recommendations together with your child in an effort to support reading choices that best meet his/her interests and reading ability. We have collaborated with both the Middletown Township Public Library and the Holmdel location of Barnes & Noble to ensure that ample copies of titles on the recommended reading lists are available.

**Students entering 10<sup>th</sup> Grade may select from the following list of books:**



***Eleanor and Park* by Rainbow Rowell**

**Genre: Coming of Age Fiction**

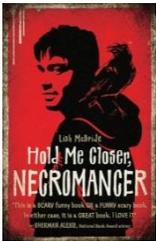
Bono met his wife in high school, Park says. So did Jerry Lee Lewis, Eleanor answers. I'm not kidding, he says. You should be, she says, we're 16. What about Romeo and Juliet? Shallow, confused, then dead. I love you, Park says. Wherefore art thou, Eleanor answers. I'm not kidding, he says. You should be. Set over the course of one school year in 1986, this is the story of two star-crossed misfits—smart enough to know that first love almost never lasts, but brave and desperate enough to try. When Eleanor meets Park, you'll remember your own first love—and just how hard it pulled you under.



***The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie**

**Genre: Young Adult Fiction**

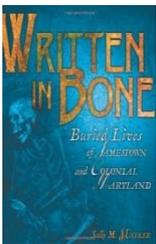
Sherman Alexie tells the story of Junior, a budding cartoonist growing up on the Spokane Indian Reservation. Determined to take his future into his own hands, Junior leaves his troubled school on the rez to attend an all-white farm town high school where the only other Indian is the school mascot. Heartbreaking, funny, and beautifully written, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, which is based on the author's own experiences, coupled with poignant drawings that reflect the character's art, chronicles the contemporary adolescence of one Native American boy as he attempts to break away from the life he thought he was destined to live.



***Hold Me Closer, Necromancer* by Lish McBride**

**Genre: Young Adult Fiction; Horror**

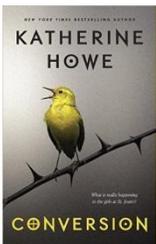
Sam leads a pretty normal life. He may not have the most exciting job in the world, but he's doing all right—until a fast food prank brings him to the attention of Douglas, a creepy guy with an intense violent streak. Turns out Douglas is a necromancer who raises the dead for cash and sees potential in Sam. Then Sam discovers he's a necromancer too, but with strangely latent powers. And his worst nightmare wants to join forces . . . or else. With only a week to figure things out, Sam needs all the help he can get. Luckily he lives in Seattle, which has nearly as many paranormal types as it does coffee places. But even with newfound friends, will Sam be able to save his skin?



***Written in Bone: Buried Lives of Jamestown and Colonial Maryland* by Sally M. Walker**

**Genre: Realistic Fiction**

How did the colonists of Jamestown and Maryland live and die? Forensic anthropology provides an incredible array of answers. Scientists can look into a grave and determine the skeleton's gender, age at time of death, nationality, and sometimes even economic standing within minutes. Laboratory studies can provide cause of death information. Once these details are known, some skeletons can even be matched with a name via the historical record. Sibert-winning author Sally M. Walker worked side by side with archaeologists and forensic anthropologists in her research for this uniquely appealing book.



***Conversion* by Katherine Howe**

**Genre: Mystery**

“It’s senior year at St. Joan’s Academy, and school is a pressure cooker. College applications, the battle for valedictorian, deciphering boys’ texts: Through it all, Colleen Rowley and her friends are expected to keep it together. Until they can’t. First it’s the school’s queen bee, Clara Rutherford, who suddenly falls into uncontrollable tics in the middle of class. Her mystery illness quickly spreads to her closest clique of friends, then more students and symptoms follow: seizures, hair loss, violent coughing fits. St. Joan’s buzzes with rumor; rumor blossoms into full-blown panic. Soon the media descends on Danvers, Massachusetts, as everyone scrambles to find something, or someone, to blame. Pollution? Stress? Or are the girls faking? Only Colleen—who’s been reading *The Crucible* for extra credit—comes to realize what nobody else has: Danvers was once Salem Village, where another group of girls suffered from a similarly bizarre epidemic three centuries ago . . . Inspired by true events—from seventeenth-century colonial life to the halls of a modern-day high school—*Conversion* casts a spell. With her signature wit and passion, New York Times bestselling author Katherine Howe delivers an exciting and suspenseful novel, a chilling mystery that raises the question, what’s really happening to the girls at St. Joan’s?” - Amazon



***Come August, Come Freedom* by Gigi Amateau**

**Genre: Historical Fiction**

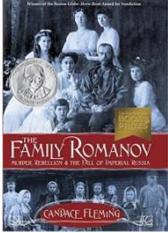
“In a time of post-Revolutionary fervor in Richmond, Virginia, an imposing twenty-four-year-old slave named Gabriel, known for his courage and intellect, plotted a rebellion involving thousands of African-American freedom seekers armed with refashioned pitchforks and other implements of Gabriel’s blacksmith trade. The revolt would be thwarted by a confluence of fierce weather and human betrayal, but Gabriel retained his dignity to the end. History knows little of Gabriel’s early life. But here, author Gigi Amateau imagines a childhood shaped by a mother’s devotion, a father’s passion for liberation, and a friendship with a white master’s son who later proved cowardly and cruel. She gives vibrant life to Gabriel’s love for his wife-to-be, Nanny, a slave woman whose freedom he worked tirelessly, and futilely, to buy. Interwoven with original documents, this poignant, illuminating novel gives a personal face to a remarkable moment in history.” -Amazon



***Tomboy* by Liz Prince**

**Genre: Graphic Novel/Memoir**

“Tomboy is a graphic novel about refusing gender boundaries, yet unwittingly embracing gender stereotypes at the same time, and realizing later in life that you can be just as much of a girl in jeans and a T-shirt as you can in a pink tutu. A memoir told anecdotally, Tomboy follows author and zine artist Liz Prince through her early childhood into adulthood and explores her ever-evolving struggles and wishes regarding what it means to "be a girl." From staunchly refuting anything she perceived as being "girly" to the point of misogyny, to discovering through the punk community that your identity is whatever you make of it, regardless of your gender, Tomboy is as much humorous and honest as it is at points uncomfortable and heartbreaking.” -Amazon



***The Family Romanov* by Candace Fleming**

**Genre: Nonfiction**

“ Here is the tumultuous, heartrending, true story of the Romanovs—at once an intimate portrait of Russia's last royal family and a gripping account of its undoing. Using captivating photos and compelling first person accounts, award-winning author Candace Fleming (*Amelia Lost*; *The Lincolns*) deftly maneuvers between the imperial family's extravagant lives and the plight of Russia's poor masses, making this an utterly mesmerizing read as well as a perfect resource for meeting Common Core standards “-Amazon



***Somebody, Please Tell Me Who I Am* by Harry Mazer & Peter Lerangis**

**Genre: Realistic Fiction**

Ben lives a charmed life—effortlessly landing the lead in the high school musical, dating the prettiest girl in school. When he decides to enlist in the army after 9/11, no one thinks he'll be in real danger. But his decision has devastating consequences: His convoy gets caught in an explosion, and Ben ends up in a coma for two months. When he wakes up, he doesn't know where he is—or remember anything about his old life. His family and friends mourn what they see as a loss, but Ben perseveres. And as he triumphs, readers will relate to this timely novel that pairs the action and adventure of the best war stories with the emotional elements of struggle and transformation.

# SUMMER SUMMER SUMMER

## Summer Reading Assignment for Students Entering Grades 9-12

- Students will be required to read a minimum of 2 books from the above list, however, more are encouraged.
- Students will conduct a book talk on one of the books they have read when they return to school in September.
- **Students are required to provide a written list of the books they read including the name of each author.**
- When they return to school in September the student and teacher will collaborate to decide which book they will use for their book talk.
- Students may want to review some web-based examples of book talks. The website below is one source that may be useful: <http://nancykeane.com/booktalks/student.htm>
- Students will be required to complete an in-class timed writing on the book they did not select for their book talk.

*Students should follow the guidelines listed below as they prepare for their book talks.*

### Giving a Good Book Talk:

- Plan to speak for about 3-5 minutes
- Briefly summarize the plot of the book and identify the genre, but **do not** give away the ending. Think about what you would and would not have wanted to know before reading.
- Prepare what you are going to say about the book. You don't need to memorize, but you need to know the points you are going to make. Practice until you are comfortable with your material.
- Optional topics to focus on:
  - The theme of the book
  - The major conflict
  - A brief description of the main characters and their relationships
  - Setting and how it relates to the plot and characters
  - Mention if the book reminds you of another book you have read or a movie you have seen
  - Identify what you think the author would have wanted readers to take from the experience of reading the book
  - Tell the audience if you recommend the book and why or why not. Remember, even if the book was not one of your favorites, does not mean that someone else may not enjoy reading the book.
  - If you come across a significant or powerful passage, you may read it aloud. This should be short and leave the listener wanting more.